#### ****WEATHERING THE STORM IN ERSAMA****

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**Introduction**

In October 1999, a cyclone hit Orissa. It killed thousands of people and destroyed hundreds of houses. Prashant a young man, had gone Ersama, a small town, to visit one of his friends. The place was just eighteen kilometres from his own village. Towards the evening, the town was hit by a devastating cyclone. Prashant and the family of his friend were marooned on the roof of the house for two dreadful nights. On the third day, Prashant decided to go to his village. He reached there with great difficulty. He found destruction everywhere in his village. He at once gathered some young people of his village and started helping the poor and the needy. This is the story of Prashant’s courage in the face of a great calamity.

**Theme**

When a natural calamity like a storm takes place, people are put to a lot of suffering. Apart from the help the government provides, the members of the community should also mobilise themselves to solve their problems. In this story, we see how a young boy, hardly 19 years old, takes the initiative and helps the members of his community to stand on their feet. His leadership qualities are praised.

**Message**

This lesson conveys the message that when a natural calamity strikes, the members of the community should help themselves. They should not be totally dependent upon the government to provide help. It also gives the message that the youth have a major role to play in organising the community to help themselves. Youth should provide a leadership role to solve the problems of the common people. In this lesson, we see the leadership provided by Prashant during the superstorm in Orissa village. We should especially concentrate our efforts on women and children who form the most vulnerable section of society.

***Justification of the title***

 A superstorm happens in Ersama in Orissa state, in 1999. A boy called Prashant sees nearly 2500 people in a pitiable condition in a storm shelter. He mobilised the people to help themselves and provided succour to them. He arranged accommodation and food for them. Even after the storm was over, for several months he was involved in rehabilitation work for the community. Since the article speaks about the efforts of the people to overcome the destruction caused by the storm, the title is appropriate

**Character Sketch**

 Prashant: Prashant is a young boy, just 19 years old. He finds himself in a village devastated by the superstorm in Orissa, in 1999. He visits the storm shelter in his village and decides to help them out. He takes up a leadership role and starts organising the people. For several months, he helps the people to overcome their difficulties and come back to normal life. He becomes a saviour of orphans and widows. Thus we find Prashant to be a born leader who is ready to work hard to help people to solve their problems. The people of his village are grateful for all his efforts. He is a role model for the youth of our country.

**Value Points**

* Prashant went to his friend’s house in Ersama.
* The evening turned into a superstorm accompanied by heavy and continuous rain. Many trees were uprooted and water entered his friend’s house.
* Superstorm destroyed everything. Water spread everywhere. Several houses were broken. Dead animals, as well as humans, were floating everywhere. His friend’s family had taken shelter on the roof and the fallen coconut trees kept them alive for several days.
* Prashant was worried about his parents. He took a strong stick and started his journey to his village. • He waded through the water and had to push away many dead bodies on way. He was worried about his parents. Perhaps they were not alive.
* He reached his village, Kalikuda. He found only roofs in the village. He went to the Red Cross shed and met his family there.
* He decided to help the victims and work for improvement. He organised a group of youths for this, put pressure on the merchants to give rice. They made fire and cooked food for the victims.
* Then, they cleaned the village and removed dead bodies floating on water.
* They made helicopters drop the packets of food. They got food for the hungry.
* Prashant was the leader of the youths. He made shelters for the orphans and persuaded the women to look after them.
* He arranged work for women and children. He worked for the rehabilitation of the orphans and the windows.
* Prashant worked for the welfare of cyclone victims. He became the leader of his village.